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Dorset
THE
PEACOCK "AT HOME,"
AND
BUTTERFLY'S BALL.

LONDON: GRANT & GRIFFITH, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

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"The Quadrupeds listen'd with sullen displeasure."

THE
PEACOCK "AT HOME:"

By MRS. DORSET.

Twenty-fourth Edition.

AND THE

BUTTERFLY'S BALL AND THE GRASSHOPPER'S FEAST:

By MR. ROSCOE. *psued.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARRISON WEIR.

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THE
VOLUME
OF THE
SERIES

THE

PEACOCK "AT HOME."



THE Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feasts
Excited the spleen of the Birds and the Beasts :
For their mirth and good cheer—of the Bee was the
theme,

And the Gnat blew his horn, as he danced in the beam ;
'Twas humm'd by the Beetle, 'twas buzz'd by the Fly,
And sung by the myriads that sport through the sky.
The Quadrupeds listen'd with sullen displeasure,
But the tenants of air were enraged beyond measure.

The *Peacock* display'd his bright plumes to the sun,
And, addressing his mates, thus indignant begun :

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"Shall we, like domestic, inelegant fowls,
 As unpolish'd as Geese, and as stupid as Owls,
 Sit tamely at home, hum-drum with our spouses,
 While Crickets and Butterflies open their houses?
 Shall such mean little insects pretend to the fashion?
 Cousin Turkey-cock, well may you be in a passion!
 If I suffer such insolent airs to prevail,
 May Juno pluck out all the eyes in my tail!
 So a fête I will give, and my taste I'll display,
 And send out my cards for St. Valentine's Day."

This determined, six fleet *Carrier-Pigeons* went out
 To invite all the Birds to Sir Argus's rout.
 The nest-loving *Turtle-Dove* sent an excuse;
 Dame *Partlet* lay in, as did good Mrs. *Goose*.
 The *Turkey*, poor soul! was confined to the rip;*
 For all her young brood had just fail'd with the pip.

* *The rip*. A machine used in poultry-yards, under which
 it is usual to confine the mother-bird with the young brood, till

The *Partridge* was ask'd ; but a neighbour hard by
Had engaged a snug party to meet in a pie ;
And the *Wheatear* declined, recollecting her cousins
Last year to a feast were invited by dozens,—
But, alas ! they return'd not ; and she had no taste
To appear in a costume of vine-leaves or paste.
The *Woodcock* preferr'd his lone haunt on the moor ;
And the traveller *Swallow* was still on his tour ;
While the *Cuckoo*, who should have been one of the
 guests,
Was rambling on visits to other birds' nests.
But the rest all accepted the kind invitation,
And much bustle it caused in the plumed creation.

Such ruffling of feathers, such pruning of coats,
Such chirping, such whistling, such clearing of throats,

it has acquired strength to follow her. The word is derived from the Saxon *hrip*, which means a covering, or protection, for the young.

Such polishing bills, and such oiling of pinions,
Had never been known in the biped dominions !
The *Tailor-Bird** offer'd to make up new clothes
For all the young birdlings who wish'd to be beaux :
He made for the *Robin* a doublet of red,
And a new velvet cap for the *Goldfinch's* head ;
He added a plume to the *Wren's* golden crest,†
And spangled with silver the *Guinea-fowl's* breast ;

* *The Tailor-Bird.* So called from the singular manner in which it constructs its nest, which is composed of two leaves, sewed together with wonderful skill by the little tailor, whose bill serves him for a needle, and the fine fibres of leaves furnish him with a substitute for thread, by which means he attaches a dead leaf to a living one, growing at the end of a branch. The Tailor-Bird is an inhabitant of India.

† *The Golden-crested Wren* is the smallest of the British Birds ; it takes its name from a circle of gold-coloured feathers, bordered with black, forming an arch above its eyes, which it has the power of raising or depressing ; it is a native of every part of Europe, and is also to be found in Asia and America.



**"Such ruffling of feathers, such pruning of coats,
Such chirping, such whistling, such clearing of throats."**

While the *Halcyon** bent over the streamlet to view
How pretty she looked in her bodice of blue.

Thus adorn'd, they set off for the Peacock's abode,
With the guide *Indicator*,† who show'd them the road:
From all points of the compass flock'd birds of all
feather;
And the *Parrot* can tell who and who were together.

* *Halcyon*, or *Kingfisher*. Esteemed the most beautiful of our native birds; but its form is clumsy, and its bill very disproportionate to its size. It inhabits the banks of rivers and streams, where it will sit for hours on a projecting branch, watching for its prey. The ancients relate many fabulous stories of this bird, as that of its laying its eggs in the depth of winter, and that during the time of its incubation the weather remains perfectly calm, whence the expression *Halcyon days*.

† *Cuculus indicator*. A bird of the Cuckoo kind, found in the interior parts of Africa; it has a shrill note, which the natives answer by a soft whistle; and the birds repeating the note, the natives are thereby conducted to the wild Bee-hives, which this bird frequents.

There was Lord *Cassowary** and General *Flamingo*,†

And Don *Peroqueto*, escaped from Domingo :

From his high rock-built eyrie the *Eagle* came forth,
And the Duchess of *Ptarmigan*‡ flew from the north.

* *Cassowary*. A large singular bird found in the island of Java, in Africa, and the southern parts of India. The head of this bird is armed with a kind of natural helmet, extending from the base of the bill to near half-way over the head.

† *Flamingo*. A bird of the crane kind, but web-footed, whose plumage is of a bright scarlet : when standing erect, it measures above six feet, though its body is not larger than that of a Goose ; and is a native of Africa, Persia, and South America.

‡ *Ptarmigan*. The white grouse, or white game, inhabits the Highlands of Scotland and the Western Islands ; it prefers the coldest situations on the highest mountains, where it burrows under the snow. It changes its feathers twice in the year, and about the end of February puts on its summer dress of dusky brown, ash, and orange-coloured feathers ; which it loses in winter for a plumage perfectly white, except a black line between the bill and the eye. The legs and toes are warmly clothed with a thick long coat of soft white feathers.

The *Grebe* and the *Eider-Duck* came up by water,
With the *Swan*, who brought out the young *Cygnets*,
her daughter.

From his woodland abode came the *Pheasant*, to meet
Two kindred arrived by the last India fleet :

The one, like a nabob, in habit most splendid,
Where gold with each hue of the rainbow was
blended;

In silver and black, like a fair pensive maid
Who mourns for her love, was the other array'd.

The *Chough** came from Cornwall, and brought up his
wife;

The *Grouse* travell'd south from his lairdship in Fife ;

* *The Chough*. This bird, which is about the size of the Daw, has a long curved bill, sharp at the point, which, as well as the legs and feet, is of a bright scarlet, contrasting beautifully with its black plumage, which varies, as the light falls on it, to a deep purple violet. Its general haunts are the crevices of high cliffs in Devonshire and Cornwall.

The *Bunting* forsook her soft nest in the reeds ;
And the *Widow-Bird** came, though she still wore
her weeds :

Sir John *Heron*, of the Lakes, strutted in a *grand*
pas.

But no card had been sent to the pilfering *Daw*,
As the Peacock kept up his progenitors' quarrel,
Which *Æsop* relates, about cast-off apparel ;
For birds are like men in their contests together,
And, in questions of right, can dispute for a feather.

The Peacock, imperial, the pride of his race,
Received all his guests with an infinite grace,

* *The Widow* or *Widah Bird* is a species of Bunting, a native of Angola and other parts of Africa ; and is remarkable for the feathers of its tail. The two middle ones are about four inches long, and ending in a long thread ; the two next are thirteen inches in length, broad, and narrowing towards the points : from these proceeds another long thread.

Waved high his blue neck, and his train he display'd,
Embroider'd with gold, and with emeralds inlaid ;
Then with all the gay troop to the shrubbery repair'd,
Where the musical birds had a concert prepar'd.

A holly-bush form'd the orchestra, and in it
Sat the *Blackbird*, the *Thrush*, the *Lark*, and the *Linnet* ;
A *Bullfinch*, a captive almost from the nest !
Now escaped from his cage, and with liberty blest,
In a sweet mellow tone joined the lessons of art
With the accents of nature, which flow'd from his heart.
The *Canary*, a much-admired foreign musician,
Condescended to sing to the fowls of condition ;
While the *Nightingale* warbled and quaver'd so fine,
That they all clapp'd their wings and declared it divine !
The *Skylark*, in ecstasy, sang from a cloud,
And *Chanticleer* crow'd, and the *Yaffil** laugh'd loud.

* *Yaffil*, the *Woodpecker*. The name *Yaffil* is provincial, but is so very expressive of the noise it continually makes, that I have

The dancing began when the singing was over :
 A *Dotterel* first open'd the ball with the *Plover* ;
 Baron *Stork* in a waltz was allow'd to excel,
 With his beautiful partner, the fair *Demoiselle* ;*
 And a newly-fledged *Gosling*, so fair and genteel,
 A minuet swam with the spruce Mr. *Teal*.
 A London-bred *Sparrow*—a pert forward cit !
 Danced a reel with Miss *Wagtail* and little *Tom Tit*.
 And the *Sieur Guillemot*† next performed a *pas seul*,
 While the elderly bipeds were playing a pool.

preferred it on that account. It is a beautiful bird, and is sometimes called the English Parrot ; the colour of its plumage, green, yellow, and scarlet, giving it some resemblance to that bird.

* *The Numidian Crane*, or *Demoiselle*, from the elegance of its appearance, and its singular carriage, is called the *Demoiselle*, which means the Young Lady ; for this bird walks very gracefully, and sometimes skips and leaps, as though it were trying to dance.

† *Guillemot*. A sea-bird, of which there are several species numerously spread over the northern world ; from whence they come towards winter to the British shores, and remain till they have reared their young. It is sometimes called "the foolish



" The dancing began when the singing was over."

p. 16.

The Dowager Lady *Toucan** first cut in
With old Doctor *Buzzard* and Admiral *Penguin* ;
From Ivy-bush tower came Dame *Owlet* the wise,
And Counsellor *Cross-bill*† sat by to advise.

Guillemot," from its stupidity ; for when their companions are shot one after another, they have so little sense of danger, that they make a small circuit, and then return and settle in the same place, to share the same fate.

* *Toucan*. A native of America, where it builds in the hollows of trees, and sits at the entrance, ready to peck at the monkeys, who often endeavour to destroy and eat the young. It is about the size of a magpie, but the head large in proportion, to enable it to support its immense bill, which is six inches and a half in length, but extremely thin. It is a mild inoffensive bird, and easily tamed, but cannot endure the cold of our climate. The feathers of the breast are highly esteemed by the natives.

† *Cross-bill*. So called because the two mandibles cross each other in different directions. They feed chiefly on the seeds of fir-trees ; the singular construction of their bills being admirably adapted to separate the seeds of the cones. The pips of apples are also a favourite food, and to obtain them, they split the apple with one stroke of their bill ; they are consequently found to be very injurious to orchards. It has been observed that they have

But the *Rook*, who protested 'twas all mighty dull,
Chicken-hazard proposed to the *Pigeon* and *Gull*:
And next day it was whisper'd he kept them so late,
That the *Pigeon* had mortgag'd the peasecod estate,
And the *Gull*, who it seems had nothing to lose,
Had made his escape, and sail'd out on a cruise.
Some birds past their prime, o'er whose heads it was
fated

Should pass many St. Valentines—yet be unmated,
Sat by, and remark'd that the prudent and sage
Were quite overlook'd in this frivolous age,
When birds, scarce pen-feather'd, were brought to a
rout,

Forward chits! from the egg-shell but newly come out.

been more frequently seen in England since the fir-tree has been more generally planted than formerly.

. On the first appearance of this little book, the six lines which commence this page gave offence in a high quarter, and were afterwards omitted. There being no longer any cause for their suppression, they are now restored to their place.



" And the Raven foretold that no good could ensue."

p. 23.

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In their youthful days they ne'er witness'd such frisking;
And how wrong in the *Greenfinch* to flirt with the
Siskin !*

So thought Lady *Mackaw* and her friend *Cockatoo*;
And the *Raven* foretold that no good could ensue !
They censur'd the *Bantam* for strutting and crowing
In those vile pantaloons, which he fancied look'd
knowing ;

And a want of decorum caused many demurs
Against the *Game Chicken* for coming in spurs.

Old Alderman *Cormorant*, for supper impatient,
At the eating-room door for an hour had been station'd,

* *Siskin*. A migratory bird, which is seen in the southern parts of England at the time of the barley harvest, and is sometimes called the Barley-bird. It has a pleasing note, and is sold as a singing-bird in the London bird-shops by the name of the Aberdevine. The accusation of its flirtation with the Greenfinch is to be understood as pure scandal, the most prying naturalists never having discovered any particular attachment between them.

Till a *Magpie*, at length, the banquet announcing,
Gave the signal, long-wish'd for, of clamouring and
pouncing :

At the well-furnish'd board all were eager to perch,
But the little Miss *Creepers* were left in the lurch.

Description must fail, and the pen is unable
To recount all the luxuries that cover'd the table.
Each delicate viand that taste could denote,
Wasps *à la sauce piquante* and flies *en compôte* ;
Worms and frogs *en friture* for the web-footed fowl,
And a barbecued mouse was prepared for the Owl ;
Nuts, grains, fruit, and fish, to regale every palate,
And groundsel and chickweed served up in a salad.
The *Razor-bill** carved for the famishing group,

* *Razor-bill*. A migratory sea-bird, which visits the northern shores in spring, and leaves them in winter : they lay a single egg on the ledges of the rocks without any nest, and on which it is said to be fixed with a cement.

And the *Spoon-bill** obligingly ladled the soup ;
So they fill'd all their crops with the dainties before 'em,
And the tables were clear'd with the utmost deco-
rum.

When they gaily had caroll'd till peep of the dawn,
The Lark gently hinted 'twas time to be gone ;
And his clarion so shrill gave the company warning
That Chanticleer scented the gales of the morning.
So they chirp'd in full chorus a friendly adieu,
And, with hearts beating light as the plumage that
grew
On their merry-thought bosoms, away they all flew.

* *Spoon-bill*. So called from the construction of the bill, which is flat the whole length, but widens towards the end in the form of a spoon or spatula ; and is equally remarkable in its substance, not being hard like bone, but flexible like whalebone. They feed on snakes, worms, frogs, and fish, even on shell-fish, which they first break with their bills.

Then long live the Peacock, in splendour unmatched,
Whose Ball shall be talk'd of by birds yet unhatch'd!
His praise let the *Trumpeter** loudly proclaim,
And the Goose lend her quill to transmit it to fame.

* *The Agami*, or *Trumpeter*. A native of America, remarkable for a singular noise, resembling the instrument from which it takes its name.

THE
BUTTERFLY'S BALL
AND THE
GRASSHOPPER'S FEAST.

THE BUTTERFLY'S BALL,

ETC.



COME, take up your hats, and away let us haste
To the *Butterfly's* Ball and the *Grasshopper's* Feast :
The trumpeter *Gadfly* has summon'd the crew,
And the revels are now only waiting for you.

So said little Robert, and pacing along,
His merry companions came forth in a throng,
And on the smooth grass, by the side of a wood,
Beneath a broad oak that for ages had stood,
Saw the children of earth and the tenants of air
For an evening's amusement together repair.

And there came the *Beetle*, so blind and so black,
Who carried the *Emmet*, his friend, on his back ;
And there was the *Gnat* and the *Dragon-fly* too,
With all their relations, green, orange, and blue.
And there came the *Moth*, with his plumage of down,
And the *Hornet*, in jacket of yellow and brown ;
Who with him the *Wasp*, his companion, did bring,
But they promised that evening to lay by their sting.
And the sly little *Dormouse* crept out of his hole,
And brought to the feast his blind brother the *Mole*.
And the *Snail*, with his horns peeping out of his
shell,
Came from a great distance—the length of an ell.
A mushroom their table, and on it was laid
A water dock-leaf, which a table-cloth made.
The viands were various, to each of their taste,
And the *Bee* brought her honey to crown the repast.
Then close on his haunches, so solemn and wise,
The *Frog* from a corner look'd up to the skies ;

And the *Squirrel*, well pleased such diversions to see,
Mounted high over-head, and look'd down from a tree.
Then out came the *Spider*, with finger so fine,
To show his dexterity on the tight line.
From one branch to another his cobwebs he slung,
Then quick as an arrow he darted along ;
But just in the middle—oh, shocking to tell !
From his rope in an instant poor harlequin fell ;
Yet he touch'd not the ground, but with talons out-
spread
Hung suspended in air at the end of a thread.
Then the *Grasshopper* came with a jerk and a spring ;
Very long was his leg, though but short was his wing :
He took but three leaps, and was soon out of sight,
Then chirp'd his own praises the rest of the night.
With step so majestic the Snail did advance,
And promised the gazers a minuet to dance.
But they all laugh'd so loud that he pull'd in his head,
And went in his own little chamber to bed.

Then, as evening gave way to the shadows of night,
Their watchman the *Glowworm* came out with a light.

Then home let us hasten, while yet we can see,
For no watchman is waiting for you and for me.
So said little Robert, and pacing along,
His merry companions return'd in a throng.

THE END.

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